Parents, Teachers, and Children has two main aims. One is to evaluate an Educational Home Visiting Scheme. The other is to present material on parents' priorities, perceptions and expectations in childrearing and to explore their implications for different types of child and adult education.

The Lothian Region Educational Home Visiting Scheme was designed to 'emphasise the unique and irreplaceable role of the mother in promoting the educational development of her children'. Mr Raven’s data suggest that the Educational Home Visitors have had a dramatic effect on parents' attitudes and that parents and children have important unmet educational and social needs. However it also 'emphasises the unique and irreplaceable role of the mother in promoting the development of her children' in a way which was not entirely anticipated when the Educational Home Visiting Scheme was initiated. The role of the mother in facilitating the growth and development of her children is underlined more heavily than in any other research so far published. As a result, serious questions are raised about the desirability of many types of educational programme both in the home and the school.
PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments
Nature and Purpose of the Report

PART I
THE LOTHIAN REGION EDUCATIONAL HOME VISITING SCHEME
1. A Brief Overview of the Lothian Region Educational Home Visiting Scheme and the Evaluation 2
2. The Background to, and Operation of, the Lothian Region Educational Home Visiting Scheme, IAN MACFADYEN 8

PART IIA
THE ILLUMINATIVE STUDY: INTRODUCTION
3. The Design of the Illuminative Study and the Author's Orientation 18
4. The International Context of the Lothian Region Educational Home Visiting scheme as an Evaluated Experimental Programme 27
5. Three Styles of Visiting 38

PART IIB
SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES OF PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE
6. Language Development 45
7. Discipline Strategies and Cognitive Development 55
8. Teachering versus Mothering 59
9. Facilitating Personal Learning 65

PART IIC
THE PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE SCHEME
10. The Effects and Probable Effects of the Project on the Children Involved 72
11. The Effects and Probable Effects on the Parents 84
12. The Effects and Probable Effects on the Schools 87
13. The Possible and Probable Long Term Personal and Social Effects of the Scheme 89

PART IIIA
THE STATISTICAL STUDY: INTRODUCTION
PART IIIB

THE IMPACT OF THE LOTHIAN REGION EDUCATIONAL HOME VISITING SCHEME

15. Do Parents feel they can have an Impact on their Children's Development? 110
16. The Importance Attached to Children's Developing Certain Qualities of Character, and to Parents' Engaging in Certain Activifies and Practices with their Children 112
17. Why are Certain Activities believed to be Important or Unimportant? 123
18. What can be Done to foster Certain Qualities? 129
19. Which of the Qualities that a Child learns from his Parents are Most Important for his Future? 137
20. What do Parents actually Do with their Children? 138
21. The Problems Parents Expected as their Children got Older 147
22. Parents' Perceptions of their Problems and their Confidence in their Ability to Cope with them 149
23. The Parents' Role in the Formal Educational System 163

PART IIIC

SUMMARY, GENERAL DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STATISTICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF THE LREHV SCHEME

24. Summary, Discussion and Implications of the Statistical Results 168

PART IV

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BACKGROUND DATA FOR HOME VISITING AND THE DESIGN OF HOME VISITING PROGRAMMES

25. The Malleability of Human Nature 189
26. What is Important in Child-rearing? 192
27. "Why, Mummy?" 210
28. Parents as Teachers 216
29. Parents' Attitudes toward Formal Education 229
30. A Tailpiece to Part IV 242

PART V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

31. Some Remaining Questions: Further Action and Research 248

REFERENCES 253
INDEX 261
become a realistic expectation. In that case the parents might be more prepared to say that it was important to them. And, indeed, the Home Visited group are much more likely to say that school success is important to them. Having raised such expectations, and led the parents they visit to believe that these are realistic expectations, are the Home Visitors going to be able to deliver the goods? And, if not, what are they going to do to help the parents to adjust to the frustration which they may have created? The case for Home Visiting programmes building in provision to follow through with parents seems to be strong indeed.

How is School Success to be Promoted?

How do parents think that intellectual development and school success are to be promoted? Neither group thinks school success is to be promoted by punishing children who do not do well there. 87% of HSES parents and 49% of LSES parents said that it was “important not to do this” (Table A4). Given that LSES parents are much less likely than HSES parents to think it is important not to punish their children for failure at school, it may be important for the EHVs to be particularly careful to avoid giving the impression that they in any way accept the view that children should be punished for failure. This may seem like an unnecessary comment, but one of the EHVs was observed smacking one of the children she visited for not sitting still and paying attention.

The fact that the HSES group is no more likely than the LSES group to think that it is important for their children to work and study on their own when they are older, or for them to continue the work of the school in the home, provides food for thought. Like the failure of the HSES group to attach more importance to school success than the LSES group, these findings suggest that the relative success of their children in the educational system may not be a result of pressure and hard work. Rather it may be a product of more basic abilities, attitudes and motivation which may be promoted by engaging the child in particular activities. Tomlinson and Tenhouten’s (1976) data strongly support this conjecture, and draw attention to the importance of interpersonal behaviours which go far outside the cognitive realm. Such behaviours include making oneself and one’s work known to authorities taking an interest in, and supporting, what the authority is doing, setting out to be different from others and therefore noticeable, and expressive behaviours of one sort or another.

The fact that the Home Visitors not only appear to have led the parents they visited to think that school success is more important
than they did before, but also to think it is more important for the children to work and read on their own a lot when they are older (possibly in order to achieve that success) suggests that they may be selling a comforting Protestant ethic in which hard work is expected to be rewarded both in this world and in the next. More than that, as we have seen, they may be encouraging parents to see simple and direct links between parental behaviour and outcomes, rather than the much more indirect relationships which may be perceived by the HSES group and which may be behind the HSES group’s relative success.

Evidence that the HSES group do see the process as less direct, more subtle, and more differentiated is also contained in Figure 3. Some of the most striking differences between the HSES and LSES groups are on the items dealing with books in the home, using books to find information for oneself, and promoting concentration and the ability to settle down. Only 14% of LSES parents said that this last was “very important” compared to 48% of HSES parents.

“That’s one of the most important ways of preparing them for school. It doesn’t matter if you teach them to read, write and do sums. They can learn all that when they get there anyway. But if you teach them to sit—and listen—and pay attention—you’ve given them all the abilities they need to learn.” (H) (Teacher, mother of 3).

The value for sedentary intellectual activity isolated from action, knowledge as something to be absorbed rather than created, and knowledge as what goes on in schools rather than in life, could not be more apparent.

“Och, not! Not wee bairns like that. You can’t tie them down at that age. They’re always wanting to be up and about, never wanting to do the same thing for two minutes in a row. They just get bored if you make them concentrate on one thing.” (L) (Father of 2, aged 4 and 6).

It is clear that HSES and LSES parents have very different expectations of their children at this age. The HSES parents expect their children to be able to concentrate, act responsibly, and reason. They regard them as possessing most of the abilities and motivations possessed by adults. LSES parents, in contrast, are less inclined to believe this; they are more inclined to think that their children lack these abilities and motivations and must be protected from injury and the effects of ignorance and coerced into whatever behaviours are essential to the smooth running of the family and society. The indirect process of promoting success—whether that success is to be defined in terms of school or anything else—by fostering concentration, the willingness to observe and think for oneself, the tendency to study
casual sequences and find the information one needs in books and, perhaps above all, the ability to lead others to recognise the value of one's contribution, cannot, therefore, be used. It is a totally different way of thinking, and it is noticeable that the EHV's have not been particularly successful in influencing discipline expectations toward the assumption that the child is capable of reasoning and acting responsibly, leading the parents to focus on promoting the development of concentration, or bringing their children to see books as a potential source of help in coping with their problems.

Some of the parents who do not think about child development in this more complex way are not merely indifferent to it. They are actively opposed to it. For example, asked how important it was for their child to use books to find information for himself one LSES mother commenced:

"I wouldn't want that. You never know what he might come across, poking about in books. I'd rather he asked his father or his teacher." (L)

The fear of the consequences of original sin (curiosity) could not be more apparent. Attention may also be drawn to this mother's assumption about internalised controls. The child is not expected to have the ability to know what is bad for him. As another informant said, in the course of another study, when the author asked him about the importance of censorship of books and periodicals:

"Oh, yes—that's very important. I couldn't even trust myself with that stuff." (L)

Other comments made during the interviews also reveal that, in the absence of internalised controls, to which we will return later, independence does make for unruly behaviour.

From such comments it follows that, as the Home Visitors emphasise, and as other authors such as Hess and Shipman (1965), Brandis and Bernstein (1974) and, in a completely different context, Watts (1977) have emphasised, there is an extremely close connection between the promotion of active intellectual enquiry and discipline practices and expectations. As we have already observed, many secondary schools seem to have adopted the LSES parents' views on discipline, and Lynn's (1977) work might be taken to indicate that these are having the effects on intellectual development which the material reviewed here would lead one to expect.

If the Educational Home Visitors wish to lead the parents they visit (and therefore, perhaps, in the long run their fellow teachers) to adopt a more complex view of development and to see their children as more
competent, capable of reasoning, and developing internalised, reasoned, moral codes, there are elements of their work, already stressed more by some EHV's than others, which could be strengthened. Demonstrating to parents that their children can concentrate, can reason, and can act responsibly are among them. Unfortunately the idea of demonstrating to parents that children can concentrate, reason and act responsibly poses a number of problems. In the first place, the EHV's often feel that they have to "cover ground" in their "lessons". They are frequently found leading children on to new things just as they become absorbed in one task. They are aware of the dilemma, but most have tended to resolve it either by arguing that they must introduce the parent to as many things as possible which might interest the child—or by arguing that it is necessary to introduce the child to a wide range of concepts and cognitive skills which are all of potential importance in cognitive development.

The concept of "concentration" is also inherently ambiguous. Children will often become absorbed in tasks—like playing with water—and persist at them for long periods of time despite the fact that they do not seem to be "learning" anything from them. Both the parents and some of the EHV's seem to feel that it is justifiable to interrupt a child involved in such activities in order to move him on to something else. What's more, schools also tend to favour the child who wants to concentrate on books and teachers, rather than the child who wants to concentrate on some idiosyncratic problem which is known only to him. What we may be saying is, therefore, that concentration is not a generalisable ability, but rather something which forms part of what we mean when we say that someone is interested in a particular problem or topic. The EHV's task may, therefore, be to interest children in intellectual activity—and it may (or may not) be necessary for them to acknowledge that such interest will only come about at the expense of some other interest.

But, in conclusion to this section, we should emphasise that we ourselves are not convinced that the HSES group's perceptions and expectations are correct. It may well be that children are unable to reason, concentrate and act responsibly. Even if HSES children are able to do these things it does not necessarily follow that all children are able to do so. It may well be that LSES parents' children need to learn to concentrate on, think about, and practise different things—such as how to win a fight. It may well be that HSES parents are wrong to think that these more subtle processes of child rearing actually work. It may well be that what works, and is appropriate to, one group of children is not appropriate to another group. We have
repeatedly pointed out that differences in parents' expectations may reflect real differences, not only in their children's behaviour, but also in their own experience. Morton-Williams et al. (1968) and Raven et al. (1975) found that early school leavers, and pupils who expected to enter low status occupations, regardless of their background, were much more anxious than others to have school activities in which they could move about and did not have to sit still all day. The conclusion to be drawn may therefore be that not all children should be expected to sit still and concentrate on books! It is therefore, once again, of the greatest importance to find out whether the EHV project has been able to influence such things as levels of concentration, interest in intellectual activity, and the ability to reason.

We may turn now to a discussion of the more directly school-related activities included in Figure 3. Despite our findings that HSES parents attach more importance to activities related to the promotion of cognitive development in their children, such as reading to the child, talking to him, and having books at home, no parents in the HSES group said it is very important to teach their child to read before he goes to school, compared to 12% of parents in the LSES areas. Indeed, 20% of HSES parents, compared to 6% of LSES parents, say it is important not to do this.

Altogether, responses to this question are very varied, both within and between groups. Many parents, especially in the HSES areas, attach “some importance” to teaching their children to read, qualifying their answer by saying “I would do it if she asked, or seemed interested, but not otherwise.”

Other parents are worried that the child might get bored at school, or confused by being taught in a different way.

“She was always asking me—‘what’s that word—what does this say?’—and so on, but I didn’t like to take it any further in case her teacher didn’t like it when she got to school.” (L)

Many parents report having been told by teachers definitely not to attempt to teach reading.

On the other hand, it appears that a number of LSES parents attach great importance to teaching of reading, but, in some cases, lack the knowledge necessary to carry it out.

“I think it’s very important, it gives them a start. But I got books, Ladybird ones, and tried to get him to read them. After the first day or two it would end in tantrums and screaming fits…” (L)

HSES parents, on the other hand, attach less importance to the actual teaching of reading and more importance to indirect “pre-
reading” activities, such as matching, copying shapes, reading and
telling stories, and increasing vocabulary.

Although the EHVs are clearly more inclined to share the HSES
parents’ priorities, the problem of what to do with those parents who
wish to teach their children to read—presumably because of its direct
relevance to school success—remains, for the EHVs have not been able
to stop parents thinking it is important. In fact, discussion of this topic
at the EHVs’ meeting revealed that they were plagued by exactly the
same dilemmas as the parents—and it is clear that this is a problem
which cannot be tackled without involving the local schools. It is
worthy of note that, since the Home Visitors—who are themselves
teachers—have had so little success in gaining the schools’ agreement
and co-operation on this issue, one can hardly expect the parents to do
so. Nevertheless, as it happens, it was the parents who persuaded the
reception class teacher in one of the project schools to share her
professional know-how in this area with the parents.

**Discipline Expectations**

Figure 3 also documents differences between HSES and LSES
parents’ expectations of their children and difference in their percep-
tions of their children’s competence. The HSES parent is more likely
to think that her child is open to reason, that he is capable of respecting
his parents because of the quality of their behaviour rather than out of
fear, more willing to accept the absence of instant compliance with
commands—perhaps because she feels that the child will have good
reasons for not complying with them, perhaps because she feels that
the child needs to develop a view of himself as someone who has a
right to question commands, or perhaps because she feels that what
the child is already doing is important to him and that he has a right to
continue with it, or that the development of important qualities will be
stunted if he is forced to stop what he is doing, and less likely to think
that punishment is essential in order to eliminate undesired behaviour
and induce compliance. And there is further evidence that the LSES
parents are less likely to think that their children are capable of
learning by example: they are less likely to think that it is important for
children to spend time in the company of people who handle
responsibility well and less likely to say that it is important for their
children to see their parents working hard and being resourceful.
While this may be because they feel themselves to be less capable
than HSES parents of providing that example, we will shortly see that
this explanation is not sufficient to cover all the items which have been
studied.